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## Thousands bid farewell to Didarul

AGENCIES

Thousands of mourners gathered outside Parkchester Jame Masjid in New York's Bronx on Thursday, as Didarul Islam, the 36-year-old Bangladeshi-American NYPD officer killed in a mass shooting last week, was laid to rest with full honours.

Moments before the funeral prayer, the New York Police Department announced Didarul's posthumous promotion to Detective First Grade. "He gave everything to protect this city," said the NYPD in a tribute shared on its verified Facebook page.

"Today, Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch honoured Officer Didarul Islam with a posthumous promotion... We will never forget. Detective Islam's legacy will live on in the heart of every NYPD officer," it said.

The funeral, held under heavy skies and stifling heat, drew officers from over 54 precincts and neighbouring states, alongside community members, local leaders, and city officials, reports The New York Times.

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Police officers carry the coffin of NYPD officer Didarul Islam, who was killed in a mass shooting at a Midtown Manhattan office tower on Monday, during his funeral in rainy Bronx, New York City, US on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## EXTORTION IN GULSHAN Expelled Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad leader arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police has arrested an expelled leader of Bangladesh Gonotantrik Chhatra Sangsad in an extortion case involving the family of former Awami League MP Shammil Ahmed in Dhaka's Gulshan.



Jane Alam Apu

Jane Alam Apu, joint convener of the student organisation, was arrested from the capital's Wari area early yesterday, said Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Apu was expelled from the organisation on July 26 after the extortion allegations against him surfaced.

According to law enforcement officials, Apu and Abdur Razzak Riyad, an expelled leader of Students Against Discrimination (SAD), had allegedly been leading an extortion racket.

Briefing reporters at the DMP media centre yesterday afternoon, Talebur said they are investigating the extortion case with due importance.

In primary investigation, police found that Apu and Riyad went to the Gulshan house of the ex-lawmaker for the first time on July 17 and demanded Tk 50 lakh in extortion. They left after taking Tk 10 lakh in cash that day, Talebur said.

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## We'll be free from fascism when AL politically wiped out: Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country has been freed from fascism for now, but ultimate freedom will be achieved only when the Awami League is politically eliminated, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has said.

"There will be no compromise with those who loot banks, launder money, and grab people's property. We will not accept them. We will not let them come forward in any way," he told a rally in the capital's Azimpur yesterday.

Fakhrul also emphasised the return to democracy, saying people want the country to be run by an elected government.

"Our chief adviser has announced that an election will be held in mid-February. We want this election. Right now, there's nowhere to go. Suppose I have a problem — whom do I turn to? There's no MP.

"Who will raise my problems in parliament? There's no one. Who will speak about my demands in parliament? That's why we need an election soon. We need a parliament soon, where we can speak about our issues."

The BNP leader said every time the AL or other parties come to power, "they loot us, and we don't want to let that happen anymore".

"We have said we want democracy. What is democracy? It means people can express their opinions, cast their votes. By voting, they will choose their representatives. Those representatives will run the country."

Fakhrul said, "As Hasina did — holding daytime votes at

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## DNCC flags 98 spots as prone to waterlogging

HELEMUL ALAM

At least 98 spots in the capital's northern part remain vulnerable to waterlogging from heavy downpours, though the city corporation spent crores of taxpayer money in recent years to address the problem.

Around Tk 650 crore was spent on development and maintenance of drainage systems in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) areas from fiscal year 2020-2021 to 2023-2024, according to DNCC officials. Yet, the residents of these areas continue to suffer from flooding triggered by heavy rain.

DNCC is responsible for overseeing dozens of canals stretching over 86km, along with 300km of primary drains and 1,200km of secondary drains, said a city corporation official.

Following the July mass uprising last year, DNCC saw a change in leadership. The new administration took some measures, such as cleaning canals and drainage networks in many areas, to mitigate waterlogging. But these efforts proved insufficient.

In late May, the inadequacy of the drainage system was exposed during several days of heavy rain, which inundated many DNCC areas, including Kazipara, Shewrapara, Green Road, Bhashantek, Kalshi, Paris Road, and most parts of Uttarkhan and Dakkhinkhan.

DNCC recently identified 98 waterlogging prone spots across 40 wards where residents experienced flooding from heavy rain in May due to

faulty drainage networks and structures. The spots include the road adjacent to Mirpur-10 roundabout; Mirpur-1 crossing; Paris Road; eastern part of Kazipara metro rail station; Paschim Matikata; Khilgaon Chowdhurypara roundabout; part of airport link road; Shaheenbagh Lane 10 and 12; Uttar and Madhya Badda;

DNCC has cleaned existing drainage lines and is now evaluating its capacity to effectively drain rainwater in the identified areas, he added.

Experts attribute the persistent waterlogging to the indiscriminate filling of waterbodies and canals, compounded by outdated and inadequate drainage



A waterlogged road in the Green Road area after rain recently.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Starkul Road; Namapara and Bottala in Khilkhet area; road 1-9C and 9D in Uttara Sector-1 and road 5,6,9-13 and 16 in Uttara Sector-4.

"We have not only pinpointed the affected areas but also assessed the causes and duration of waterlogging. We are now exploring possible solutions," said DNCC Administrator Mohammad Azaz.

systems.

Adil Mohammed Khan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), said the primary cause of Dhaka's recurring waterlogging is unplanned urbanisation, which has destroyed canals, waterbodies, and flood flow zones.

"In a liveable city, waterbodies and

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## Woman beaten to death over land dispute

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 60-year-old woman was beaten to death, and two others, including a child, were injured in an attack allegedly over a land dispute in the capital's Hazaribagh early yesterday.

The deceased, Rowshan Ara, was a resident of the Kalunagar Beribadh area.

Runa Akhter, the deceased's daughter, alleged that the attack was led by a person named Abdur Rashid, who had been in a long-standing dispute with her family over the ownership of a piece of land.

According to Runa, her husband, Sub-Inspector Aminur Rahman, jointly bought 18 decimals of land with Rashid two years ago. However, Rashid had recently been attempting to forcibly take over the entire property.

Around 12:30am, according to Runa, Rashid and five to six others allegedly broke into their home and assaulted Rowshan, Runa's brother Liton, 40, and her 10-year-old son Rohan with iron rods and sticks.

The victims were taken to DMCH around 3:15am, where doctors declared Rowshan dead. Liton and Rohan were released after primary treatment.

Runa said her husband was not at home during the attack.

Hazaribagh Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Saiful Islam said five people have been detained in connection with the incident.

"There had been ongoing disputes between the two families over land and personal issues. A group of men attacked Aminur Rahman's residence, resulting in the death of a woman," the OC said.

## Potato evolved from a tomato ancestor 9m years ago

CNN ONLINE

The humble modern-day potato, first domesticated about 10,000 years ago, got its start in the Andes mountains before becoming a key crop the world depends on. But because plants don't preserve well in the fossil record, its lineage has remained largely a mystery.



Now, a team of evolutionary biologists and genomic scientists has traced the origins of this starchy staple to a chance encounter millions of years ago involving an unlikely plant relative: the tomato.

The researchers analysed 450 genomes from cultivated and wild potato species, and the genes revealed that an ancient wild tomato plant ancestor naturally bred with a potato-like plant called *Etuberosum* 9 million years ago — or interbred, as both plants had originally split off from a common ancestor plant about 14 million years ago, according to a study published Thursday in the journal Cell.



A woman collects spilled flour from the ground as Palestinians receive aid from the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) in central Gaza, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 1,373 Gaza aid seekers killed since late May

Says UN rights office

AGENCIES

The UN human rights office said yesterday that 1,373 Palestinians have been killed while waiting for aid in the shortage-stricken Gaza Strip since late May, most of them by the Israeli military.

"In total, since 27 May, at least 1,373 Palestinians have been killed while seeking food; 859 in the vicinity of (US- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation) sites and 514 along the routes of food convoys," the UN agency's office for the Palestinian territories said in a statement.

"Most of these killings were committed by the Israeli military," it added.

In a separate statement, Human Rights Watch yesterday accused Israeli forces operating outside US-backed aid centres in Gaza of routinely killing Palestinian civilians seeking food, as well as using starvation as a weapon of war.

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